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A NEW SITUATION IN THE ORIENT

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WHAT will be the effects of the war on the future of America and Europe? Answers to this question are so vital to us just now, that it is little wonder we have all but forgotten the Orient. The Revolution in Russia seems to be so closely connected with the fortunes of the war that we feel its every throb; at the same time, it was only the day before yesterday that monarchy was overthrown in China and a republic established. The capture of Jerusalem was celebrated yesterday; it will be forgotten to-morrow.

Out of the wrecks of the World War will arise a new situation in the Orient—a situation in which the people of the Orient will be free to direct the development of Eastern culture along the lines of their own peculiar genius. Can any one imagine that the nations which have been fighting for the independence of the small states of Europe will after the war permit themselves to interfere with the peaceful progress of the people of the Orient? As by a great tidal wave the world is being swept of the notion that it is given to some nations to rule and to exploit, and others to be ruled and exploited. The Great War is surely lifting the white man's burden in the Orient. Our war-time sympathy for the Russians, the Poles, the Serbs, and even the peoples of Austria-Hungary and Turkey, has increased our respect for the non-military or what Tagore calls the no-nation peoples of Asia. It is hardly to be imagined that after the war this world will be a very comfortable place for those who attempt the exploitation of the weak nations of Europe or the no-nation peoples of Asia. We refuse to believe that after this titanic struggle any outside power will be permitted to take possession of Kiachow, because of the killing of two German priests by a band of irresponsible ruffians; or that Port Arthur will be seized, because a foreign navy finds the winter there not quite so severe as at Vladivostok; or that the gateway to a "foreign" park in Shanghai will be decorated with such a sign as "Chinese and Dogs not Allowed."

It is a fact that in political organization, in militarism, and in some other respects the peoples of the Orient have not kept pace with the peoples of the Occident. But in this hour of reconstruction—or, shall I say, destruction—it may happen that some of our tests of progress and culture will be discarded. In the light of new standards the civilization of the Orient will be rejudged. The peoples of the East may yet come to be regarded as the equal of any other people in culture and in physical fiber. An Asiatic renaissance is due. And what an opportunity awaits the critical historian! The mystery of the Orient will turn out to be little more than the mystery of ignorance—the awe of things unknown. “The East is East and the West is West” promises to become as obsolete as it is meaningless.

Those who undertake the impartial investigation of Oriental culture will be impressed with the fact that Asia has made many significant contributions to world civilization. Take China as an example. It has been the custom in certain quarters to speak patronizingly of the “long sleep” of China; but China’s “long sleep” was one of enlightenment, while Europe was engaged in warfare and bloodshed. “In invention, mechanical and engineering aptitudes the Chinese have always excelled,” says Professor Herbert A. Giles in his work on “The Civilization of China,” “as witness—only to mention a few—the art of printing, the water-wheels and other clever appliances for irrigation; their wonderful bridges (not to mention the Great Wall); the taxicab or carriage fitted with a device for recording the distance traversed, the earliest notice of which takes us back to the fourth century A.D.; the system of finger prints for personal identification, recorded in the seventh century A.D. . . . Add to these the art of casting bronze, brought to a high pitch of excellence seven or eight centuries before the Christian era, if not earlier . . . the cultivation of the tea plant from time immemorial; also the discovery and manufacture of porcelain some sixteen centuries ago.”

The Chinese invented the mariner’s compass in the eleventh century B.C. It was used by the Arabs in the ninth century A.D., and later it was employed by the Europeans. Gunpowder was first made in China. The idea of paper originated in China in the year 75 A.D. The Middle Kingdom was the first country to weave silk with a pattern. In 166 A.D. the Roman Emperor Marcus Antoninus sent an embassy to China by sea to get Chinese silk. Moreover, China constructed a really wonderful canal system. Indeed, the Grand Canal in China is perhaps the oldest canal in the world. The Chinese commenced to

dig this big ditch in 486 B.C. and they did not complete the task till eighteenth century A.D. While the Panama Canal, of which we are so justly proud, is about 50 miles in length, the Grand Canal is a thousand miles long. It is still used for commercial purposes. Then there is the Great Wall, which has long been considered one of the seven wonders of the world. This wall, built against the inroads of Mongol horsemen, is two thousand miles long. It has been carried over precipitous hills and almost inaccessible mountains. "No other work of man," says Professor Albert Bushnell Hart in his "Obvious Orient," "compares with the Chinese Wall for the human labor which it cost. It contains the mass of a hundred pyramids; its masonry would build a dozen Romes or fill six Panama Canals."

Nor should one forget the immense debt which the world owes to Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Persia and India. But the space at my command compels me to limit myself to a few observations on India. Of the many things of lasting value which Hindustan has contributed to civilization I can mention only a few. The world owes the decimal notation to the Hindus. Without a decimal notation arithmetic as a practical science could not have been of much value. The Hindus developed algebra to a very remarkable degree.

Arabian writers translated Hindu works on algebra in the eighth century, and Leonardo of Pisa learnt the science from the Arabians, and introduced it in modern Europe.

Geometry was first discovered in India. It was the necessity of constructing Vedic altars according to fixed rules that gave birth to this science. Mr. R. C. Dutta in his monumental work, "History of Civilization in Ancient India," says that "the Hindus had discovered the first laws of geometry in the eighth century before Christ, and imparted it to the Greeks." There is reason to believe that the earliest teachers of trigonometry were also the Hindus. That they had developed a high degree of civilization will be evidenced from the fact "that the exact anatomy of the human body was known to the Hindus so far back as the sixth century B.C., that surgery was an applied science in India during the early centuries of the Christian era; that the first hospitals of the world were built by Hindu scientists and philanthropists, that the application of minerals to therapeutics is very old among the Hindu medical practitioners, that zinc was discovered in India before the time of Paracelsus, and that circulation of blood was known before Harvey."

India knew something also of the theory of evolution "cen-

turies before Spencer established it scientifically, or Darwin applied it to man's story, or Huxley bore down with it so aggressively on faith. It was the cardinal doctrine of the sages in India." Dr. R. Heber Newton in his article on "The Influence of the East on Religion" published in an issue of *Mind* not long ago wrote as follows:

Confirmed idealist as was the Hindu philosopher . . . he could speak of the material world only in terms of mind. Evolution became the doctrine of the progressive unfolding of life through the action of an Infinite and Eternal Spirit. It was, it is, the history of the Divine being. It was, it is, a religion. And this Eastern wisdom our Western world can not reject as an alien conception when not alone idealist philosophers like Berkeley hold it, but savants like Huxley confess that, as between the two conceptions of idealism and materialism, they would have to take the first theory.

To enter upon an extensive discussion of the various phases of Hindu culture is beyond the scope of the present paper; suffice it to say in the words of Professor Rawlinson that "there is scarcely a problem in the science of ontology, psychology, metaphysics, logic, or grammar, which the Indian sages have not sounded as deeply, and discussed as elaborately, as the Greeks." It may therefore be confidently said that from Asia came the sparks of science and literature which opened the way for Europe's material progress.

Important as all these contributions are, they are but trifles compared to Asia's gift to the spiritual welfare of the human race. The East is the home of religions. All the great religions of the world, which have stood the test of time, have come from the East. Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Zoroastrianism, Mohammedanism—all had their birth in the East. Real Christianity—that is, Christianity uninfluenced by Greek speculation, Roman institutionalism, and medieval scholasticism—is an Asiatic religion. The Nazarine Christ himself was an Asiatic of Asiatics.

No one need conclude, however, that Asians were all abstract thinkers, closet philosophers. Careful students of Oriental history know that the Asian is both a religious and a political animal. It is a fact that the "Hindus had developed republican city-states of the Hellenic type and clan-commonwealths and village institutions of the folk-moot type, that the first, most extensive and centralized empire of the world was the Hindu empire of the Mauryas (fourth to third century B.C.), that a census of a people according to social and economic status was actually undertaken in the fourth century B.C., that the Hindu generals could organize and manipulate a regular standing army

of 600,000 infantry, besides a vast cavalry and an efficient camel-corps and elephant-corps." From the earliest times down to the twelfth century A.D., Hindus, Chinese, Mongols, and Saracens made themselves rulers and conquerors wherever they went. Indeed, Asian Charlemagnes, Fredericks, and Napoleons are almost countless in number. In the beginning of the thirteenth century Genghis Khan and his followers went into Europe and conquered Russia. The Russian princes became the dependents of the great Khan, and had frequently to seek his far-distant court, some three thousand miles away, where he freely disposed of their crowns and sometimes their heads. For over two centuries Russia paid tributes to an Oriental potentate. It was not until about the close of the fifteenth century that the princes of Moscow were able to free themselves from the Mongol yoke. And yet as late as in 1547, writes a modern historian,

Ivan the Terrible assumed the Asiatic title of Tsar, which appeared to him more worthy than that of king or emperor. The costumes and etiquette of the court were also Asiatic. The Russian armor suggested that of the Chinese, and their head dress was a turban.

Consider again another race of conquerors from Central Asia, namely, the Turks. The Osmanali Turks started in their career of conquest in the thirteenth century. They advanced to southeastern Europe, and captured Constantinople itself in 1453. At its greatest height in 1683 the Ottoman state extended its sway almost to the very gates of Vienna.

Professor Benoy Kumar Sarkar in his scholarly work, "The Chinese Religion through Hindu Eyes," rightly said:

The darkest period of European history known as the Middle Ages is the brightest period in Asia. For over a thousand years from the accession of Gupta Vicramaditya to the throne of Pataliputra down to the capture of Constantinople by the Turks the history of Asia is the history of continuous growth and progress. It is the record of political and commercial as well as cultural expansion—and the highest watermark attained by oriental humanity. . . . It was the message of this orient that was carried to Europe by the Islamites and led to the establishment of medieval universities. In describing the origin of Oxford, Green remarks in the "History of the English People": "The establishment . . . was everywhere throughout Europe a special work of the new impulse that Christianity had gained from the Crusades. A new fervor of study sprang up in the West from its contact with the more cultured East. Travellers like Abelard of Bath brought back the first rudiments of physical and mathematical science from the schools of Cordova or Bagdad.

Some may say that the Oriental system of government was not democratic. The charge is perhaps true. One must remember, however, that the democratic state is after all of very

recent growth. It is safe to assert that there was no true democracy in Europe before the French Revolution. Germany still bends her knee before a divine-right kaiser. Although the formal constitution of modern Italy dates back to 1848, the Italians did not have a national government till 1861. France suffered from horrors of untold chaos and confusion, and waded through seas of blood before she was able to establish a stable government in the Third Republic in 1870. The English government in the eighteenth century was praised with great enthusiasm by Voltaire in his "Letters on the English" and by Montesquieu in his celebrated work, "The Spirit of the Laws"; but after the French Revolution, the same English government was found to be medieval in its backwardness. The English Parliament of that time, says a historian of modern Europe, was "only a council of wealthy landlords and nobles who often gained their seats by bribery and could not be said to represent the nation, which had, indeed, little to do with their election. The English law was still shockingly brutal; citizens who did not accept the Thirty-nine Articles were excluded from office; and education was far from the reach of the masses." It is also a matter of common knowledge that universal manhood suffrage did not exist in Europe even during the first half of the nineteenth century.

These facts are sometimes lost sight of by European critics when they pass judgment upon the Oriental system. With their eyes fixed on their own time, they pass upon the entire history of Oriental culture extending through thousands of years. The comparison is unjust and unscientific.

A comparison of the civilization of Europe and Asia people by people, epoch by epoch, century by century, reveals the truth that up to the time of Napoleon "the East and the West were practically equal in science and sociology and other branches of human thought and endeavor." The question may now be asked, What caused the divergence in development in the modern period? The answer is clear: it was the industrial revolution, due to mechanical inventions, which led Europe to follow a different course. Steam was first applied to industrial uses in England in 1815. It was not applied to industries in France and Germany till 1835 or later. This industrial revolution in the nineteenth century had no counterpart in Asia.

Because Asia had not advanced along modern industrial lines, Europeans have sometimes been inclined to consider themselves as belonging to an inherently superior race. But this assumption of racial superiority is open to serious doubts.

Indeed, the verdict of modern ethnological science seems to be that there is no such thing as an inherently superior or an inherently inferior race. History frequently has the unpleasant knack of repeating itself. "Yesterday Asia stood on the heart of Europe; to-day Europe stands on the heart of Asia." The masters of to-day may be the slaves of to-morrow. It is, of course, freely admitted that there are differences between the East and the West; but these differences are superficial, and not fundamental. At the same time it must be admitted that there is a fundamental identity of the human ideals of Asia and Europe. It must be conceded by unprejudiced observers that for all practical purposes the peoples of these two continents, given the same conditions, are essentially equal in intellect, in ethics, and in martial prowess. I am willing to go even further, and admit without argument that in all cardinal virtues Asians and Europeans stand on the same footing, and that in all cardinal vices they are equally degenerate and equally to be condemned. To an Asian who has not lost his historical perspective it is unthinkable that the white countries are superior just because they are white: to him such a theory is a myth or a fable.

It is in the modern epoch that the people of Asia have been confronted with a really gigantic problem—the problem of foreign domination. With one or two exceptions, almost all Asia and its adjacent islands have been brought either under the direct control of Western nations or within their spheres of influence. According to Professor Hornbeck the total European possessions in Asia are 9,500,000 square miles with a population of 400,000,000. And we are told by Dr. Paul S. Reinsch, the present American ambassador at Peking, that most of these territorial gains have come through "deceitful selfishness, rapacity, and bloodshed." In the year 1900, the "mailed fist" Kaiser invented the crude slogan of the "Yellow Peril"—a thing which exists only in imagination. Professional war-makers, however, both in America and Europe have been industriously bombarding their countrymen with pamphlets, addresses, and newspaper articles in an effort to prove that the hosts of Asia threaten to overrun Europe and America. It is safe to say emphatically that the Yellow Peril does not now and never did exist. On the other hand, the White Peril did exist—at least when at the time of the Boxer rebellion in 1900 the German Kaiser instructed his troops to "be as terrible as Attila's Huns," or when in 1914 the same Kaiser of the "mailed fist" addressed his Army of the East in these words:

Remember that you are the chosen people! The spirit of the Lord has descended upon me because I am Emperor of the Germans. I am the instrument of the Almighty. I am His sword, His agent. Let them perish, all the enemies of the German people! God demands their destruction; God who, by my mouth, bids you do His will.

To be sure there were critics who held that the European domination of Asia was justifiable because the European system of government and industry is characterized by order, discipline, and efficiency. But since these attributes—order, discipline, and efficiency—have appeared as the chief virtues of the Prussian system—a system which the whole civilized world has pledged itself to destroy—this argument has indeed faded a bit.

We must never forget that Asians are human beings. They, too, have "eyes, hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections and passions." They could not possibly be kept in bondage forever to any foreign power. Autocracy in this second decade of the twentieth century, whether in the East or in the West, is opposed to science, reason and ethics. Autocracy is the sworn foe of democracy. Autocracy is dramatized barbarism. Can it be that the thousands upon thousands of Asians who have given their lives and their all in this war of civilization since August, 1914, with the expectation of bringing democracy into all parts of the world have died in vain?

Our great President, the acknowledged spokesman of the allied nations, has declared that we are in this struggle to make the world a safe place for democracy. These words of hope and cheer have been acclaimed by the nations of the Orient as those of a prophet. Who shall now say that the "world" to which our President referred in his immortal message does not include the continent of Asia—Asia which is inhabited by more than half of the human race? Is not the Orient with its teeming millions really a part of this world which is visioned for democracy? At the close of the great conflict, for which the Oriental peoples have made great sacrifices, will they not have the right to ask for an assurance of the Westerners that they are really their friends and brothers? Nationality is being accepted everywhere as a principle. Not only Roumania, Serbia and Belgium, but all countries, great and small, all peoples, white or yellow, have a right to a national existence. In our relations with the Orient shall we deny this principle which has become the mainspring of our action?

Asia is already proceeding on the theory that after the war there will be the most friendly understanding and cooperation

between the East and the West. Moreover, at this parting of ways Asian leaders of thought are prepared to take a leaf from the book of American experience. Asian statesmen are considering nothing less than a Monroe Doctrine for Asia—a doctrine which will declare that the Asian continent shall not be considered a place for future colonization by European powers, and that any attempt to extend the European system to any portion of the Orient will be considered an act of deliberate unfriendliness. And just as the American Monroe Doctrine checked the intervention of the Holy Alliance in the affairs of the New World in the nineteenth century, so the Asian Monroe Doctrine will be expected to stop the exploitation of unholy imperialism in Asia in the twentieth century.

The countries of Asia by their fundamental identity of economic, social, religious, and intellectual life are a unity. The nations of the Orient by geographical proximity and by natural sympathy are friends. They are natural allies. Being conscious of their common interests, they are willing to act together. They insist that trade and commerce should not be used as a cloak of unscrupulous financial imperialism; they declare that taking possession of their property under the disguise of building railroads, operating mines, and otherwise exploiting their natural resources are not and can not be the final judgment of justice.

It is, therefore, highly significant that the people of the Orient with a view to their own security and well-being, as well as for world peace, are prepared to assert a Monroe Doctrine for Asia. This would not mean the expulsion of all Europeans from Asia—as the Jews, for instance, were driven out of Spain. It will only imply the end of foreign domination in the East, the indefinite continuance of which spells Asian degradation, Asian bankruptcy and Asian suicide. Any wrongs that may have been perpetrated in Asia, of course, must be redressed; but not by the commission of similar wrongs. A policy of revenge, of vindictive action, will not be in keeping with the traditional character of the Orient, which is generous and forgiving. Asian-European problems should be solved not through bloodshed, but through mutual understanding, sympathy, friendship, and enthusiasm for humanity.

The Hon. Iichiro Tokutomi, a crown member of the House of Peers of Japan, in explaining the object of this proposed doctrine of Asian public law in the *Japan Chronicle* of January, 1917, writes:

By the Asiatic Monroe Doctrine we mean the principle that Asiatic

affairs should be dealt with by the Asiatics. . . . We do not hold so narrow-minded a view as to wish to drive the Whites out of Asia. What we want is simply that we become independent of whites, or free Yellows of the rampancy of the whites. . . . The Asiatic Monroe Doctrine is the principle of Eastern autonomy, that is, of Orientals dealing with Eastern questions. . . . We are ready to leave the Europeans to attend to European affairs, and the Americans to American questions, but we demand that they should leave Orientals to attend to their own questions.

The natural leader of this Pan-Oriental movement is Japan, which Professor Roland G. Usher in his "Challenge of the Future" rightly describes as "the trustee of the liberty of all Asiatics, the only state capable of loosing the greedy clutch upon the Asiatic future." Nippon is to Asia what England is to Europe—what the United States is to all America. Japan by universal consent has been admitted to the rank of world's foremost powers. And Japan, having the modern constitutional government, would be best fitted to guide the nations of Asia in their new awakening. Possibly the island empire, by reason of its military preponderance, may insist upon a certain centralization of power in herself as the chief factor. This may cause temporary friction among the nations of the Orient; but if that be the road to the ultimate goal of Asian emancipation, Japanese leadership will not be questioned, neither will there be wanting willing, voluntary cooperation.

Speaking of Japan's leadership in Asia, Sir Rabindra Nath Tagore writes in the *Modern Review* of Calcutta: "It does not surprise one to learn that the Japanese think of their country's mission to unite and lead Asia. . . . Japan can not stand alone. She would be bankrupt in competition with a United Europe, and she could not expect support from Europe. It is natural that she should seek it in Asia, in association with a free China, Siam, and perhaps in the ultimate course of things a free India. An associated Asia, even though it did not include the Semitic West, would be a powerful combination."

The ex-premier of the Republic of China, the Right Hon. Shao-Yi Tong, in his thoughtful introduction to the book, "Is Japan a Menace to Asia," gave expression to about the same views as Tagore. "China is struggling to be free and she should accept cooperation from any quarter that is truly friendly," said Mr. Tong. "Japan is China's disciple of the past, and all far-sighted Japanese believe that 'Japan without China and India is, in the long run, without legs.' I would say that China without Japan and India is without legs. . . . Some Western author has recently said: 'Japan is an international nuisance and she may easily grow to be an international

peril.' We, however, do not look at a rising Japan in the same spirit. We wish only that China and India be equally strong, that Japan hold her own on the Asiatic continent against European aggressors. Then the international nuisance, charged to Japan, but really traced to other outside forces, will cease to exist, in Asia."

It is interesting to note that, although in certain Western countries Japan is sometimes made to appear as a menace to China, by no means all Chinese share that view. Chinese, as well as other Asians, realize that Japan has a paramount interest in China. And if Japan's "stake in China is as great as that of England in Belgium, we must regard her interests there as important in a diplomatic sense as those of England in Belgium. What justifies the island empire in one continent should be held to justify the island empire in the other." Moreover, responsible Japanese officials have always disclaimed any ulterior design upon China on the part of the Mikado's government. Of the many articles which have appeared on the subject in the recent Japanese periodicals, the one by the Hon. Heikichi Ogawa, a member of the Japanese Parliament, may be considered as representative. Writing in the *Japan Magazine* of Tokio, October, 1917, Mr. Ogawa said in part:

Japan's policy in China involves the territorial integrity of that country. China is to be the most powerful friend of Japan in this policy. No Western Power must be allowed to do in China what Germany is doing in Turkey or what England is doing in Egypt. Those who hold that Japan entertains motives ulterior to these as regards China need not be answered, as they have no proof of their suspicions. When Japan has secured western guarantees as to the above policy peace will be assured and friendship between China and Japan will be permanent. When Japan brings China to a position when both can work together for their mutual independence and protection the ideal will have been attained and accomplished. . . .

Japan has to see that no part of East Asia becomes a rallying ground for western treasure-seekers; the western nations must be prevented from dragging the Far East into the squabbles. To carry western troubles and disputes into East Asia is to endanger the peace of the Orient and sow the seeds of future misfortunes. . . . China is apt to misunderstand Japan's keenness of interest in the matter; she is disposed to read into Japan's policy something of selfish designs. This will be less so as China becomes more independent of western powers. When the Far East is free from the danger of outside interference it will be more free to develop its own civilization and cultivate better forms of government. Japan and China are destined to contribute jointly to the progress of civilization in the Orient; and the result will be favorable to commerce and industry in all countries as well as those of East Asia.

If there be still any one who harbors the suspicion that,

under the disguise of championing Pan-Asianism, Japan contemplates destroying, or will be permitted to destroy, China, he should read carefully the terms of Ishi-Lansing Agreement of November, 1917, and President Wilson's words of January 22, 1917. The Agreement, which specifically provides for the maintenance and the guarding of the independence and territorial integrity of China, was entered into between the Tokio and Washington governments after the President had declared to the whole world "that the nations should with one accord adopt the doctrine of President Monroe as the doctrine of the world: That no nation should seek to extend its policy over any other nation or people, but that every people should be left to determine its own policy, its own way of development, unhindered, unthreatened, unafraid, the little along with the great and powerful."

In conclusion, it may be stated that whatever happens one thing is certain—Asia is slowly finding herself politically. The leaven of democracy is working. The principles of liberty and democracy are permeating the Asian continent. The Orient is advancing toward a new light. There may be stumbling and staggering on the way; but surely there will be no permanent halting in her progress—it will be steadily forward. Asia asks only for security and justice for herself, and betterment for the world. She has nothing but a desire to live and work on a plane of love and equality with all people. Europe should govern her course by the knowledge that she can not be in Asia for all the future. Asia will insist on being the mistress of her own house. The problem of the relation between the East and the West can be satisfactorily solved on only one basis, and that is: "justice for all, love for all, and for all, liberty."

It is our hope that from the present welter of frightful destruction and bloodshed there will come substantial gain. It is not easy to prophesy; but it is permitted to us to hope that this dark calamity will usher in the dawn of a brighter and a happier day for the world. And when that happens, may we not expect to see arise out of the ruins of this World War a superb structure—a structure of common brotherhood of the races of the world, brotherhood of international justice, of equal liberty and freedom?